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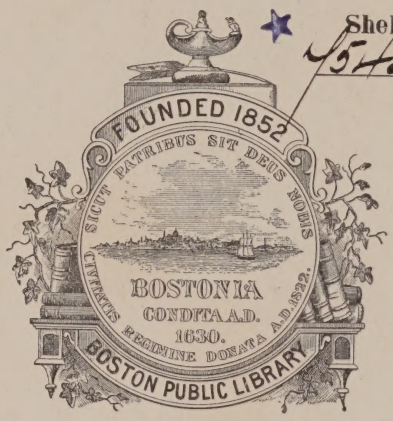

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A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE

Second Congregational Meeting-House,

KEENE, N. H.,

On Thursday, September 16, 1869,

BY REV. C. L. WOODWORTH.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF RAND, AVERY, & FRYE, 3 CORNHILL.
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B.H. Dec. 4, 1869

CORRESPONDENCE.

KEENE, Oct. 22, 1869.

REV. C. L. WOODWORTH.

Dear Sir, — At a meeting of the members of the Second Congregational Church, Keene, N.H., the undersigned, members of the same, were chosen a committee to express to you, in behalf of the church, their high appreciation of the sermon you delivered at the dedication of their new house of worship; and also to request of you a copy of the same for publication, believing that the truths therein enunciated were perfectly consonant with the gospel of Christ, and of vital interest to all the churches of our order. We most respectfully request that you will permit us to disseminate them as widely as possible. We are

Fraternally yours,

S. D. OSBORNE,
JOHN GRIMES,
S. W. HALE,
Committee.

BOSTON, Oct. 24, 1869.

MESSRS. OSBORNE, GRIMES, AND HALE.

Gentlemen, — Your note of the 22d is before me. The sermon which you ask for publication was hastily prepared, amid the pressure of other exhausting duties, and is, in many senses, imperfect; but, such as it is, I do not feel at liberty to withhold it. I accordingly submit it to your disposal.

Yours truly

C. L. WOODWORTH.

SERMON.

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."—LUKE xiv. 23.

UNDER the imagery of a feast, in the text, or of a marriage, as it is in a parallel passage, is, no doubt, shadowed the manner in which the gospel is to be given to the world, and the house of God filled with eager and desiring worshippers. There might be a difference of opinion as to whether the phrase in the text, "*my house*," refers to the earthly or the heavenly home of the people of God. But we shall all be agreed in the main *idea* which the phrase itself conveys; viz., the simple and absolute ownership of God in his own house. The Scriptures never teach differently from this. The following passage may be taken as a representative of the whole: "My house shall be called of all nations a house of prayer." By any fair interpretation, we conclude that God will have his own house, so called and so confessed, among all nations. It is not, we are sure, a rhetorical expression, to mean more or less, according to the circumstances in which it is used. There is no reason why the language should not have its natural force, and the pronoun "*my*" the full strength of the possessive case.

The tabernacle, the temple, and the synagogue of the old dispensation, and the Christian meeting-house of the new, until within two hundred years, were held as God's, his

peculiar property, and his peculiar abode. The literature of the Christian church, on this subject, is pervaded with this idea. It is a modern habit of thought and practice which has modified it, and allowed the ownership of man to come into a house dedicated to God. The meeting-house of the present time, owned and controlled by a few proprietors, is hardly fifty years old. And especially is the administration of God's house on principles of gain — as in the rental of sittings, and the sale of slips — a modern invention, a flagrant departure from the divine model and the practice of the best Christian centuries.

This is an age of discovery and improvement in various lines of human thought and effort, but not, I am satisfied, in this. Our deepest knowledge and our highest wisdom here is to find out and follow the pattern showed us in the Mount. So long as the meeting-house holds, and must forever hold, a central place in all attempts to give the gospel to the world, it is clear to our mind that we shall fail of the best success and of the ultimate aim, until the meeting-house is re-adjusted to its old, divine position.

I. Two fundamental ideas inhere in the meeting-house, neither of which can be obscured nor destroyed, without fatal loss. The first is God's ownership, and the second is man's right to enter it and use it as a child. Admit that the ownership of the sanctuary vests in God, and it follows that it is the natural and inalienable home of all his children. No man can put in a claim to any special rights and privileges in it, least of all, claim it as his own, and demand a price for its offered blessings. Such a claim would be as repugnant to Christian feeling as for one child to claim the ownership of his father's house, and forbid the other children entering there only on the payment of a fee. If I mistake not, there is an intuitive feeling in the bosom of us all that God's house should

be free to all who seek him, and that one hungry soul, equally with another, is entitled to a place there. Granted, that, for the protection of the house, the legal ownership of it must vest in some body of men: it is still possible and proper that its spiritual uses should be free and unbounded as the air and the light.

As there are common gifts of Providence which no man can limit or restrain, so are there common gifts of grace, to which all men have equal right. Among the latter we count the meeting-house; which, it seems to us, can no more be restricted in its opportunities and means than the word, the Spirit, or the offer of salvation itself. If it is not as free as the gospel which is there proclaimed, I cannot conceive that it is the house of God. This is so clearly the Bible view, as it is the historic view, that the wonder is we ever could have adopted any other.

II. If this be true, we have a right to inquire, How stands the case to-day?

Excepting the houses of the Catholic Church, and, to a good degree, of the Episcopal Church, we are obliged to confess that the meeting-house of the other denominations has been largely secularized, and is held and treated like any other property, subject to the will or caprice of the owners. The *forms* of dedication are gone through with as of old, while the proprietors dare use them to increase their gains. Indeed, it is no uncommon thing for shrewd business-men, in these times, to build a meeting-house for the purpose of enhancing the value of other kinds of real estate. This has been done more particularly at the West, to sell city lots, or to help land-speculators in their schemes of gain. And the Home Missionary Society has been called on in scores of cases to fill the pulpits of such houses, that those men may reap a larger and earlier harvest of gold.

But we do not need to go West for illustrations of this secularizing of the meeting-house. The land is full of so-called Christian churches; but, with the exceptions named, I feel no more liberty to take a seat in one of them, unbidden, than I should to intrude myself into the private parlor of my neighbor, — and for the same reason: they are both private property. But if these houses were God's, in any real sense, should I feel thus? I submit the question to actual test here. I ask my hearers if they would feel free, next Lord's Day morning, to enter any house of worship in this place, and to occupy any seat that might present? Of course not; and, when I ask for the reason, you say they are individual property. And this is your feeling not merely with reference to other denominations, but quite as much with reference to your own. You must rent your slip, and pay your price, before you have any right to sit or kneel in one of these houses. Is it any wonder the masses are leaving the churches? We need not try to disguise it: the meeting-house is no longer God's, but man's, owned, sold, rented, like other property. The results are perfectly logical. The meeting-houses are being left in the hands of the wealthy and the well-to-do. The common people are too independent to be compelled to pay a price for admission, or to ask it as a gratuity. Their intuitions are deeper than our scheming. They know, that, in God's sight, men stand on a common level of dependence and want; and they do not need to be told that wealth and social position are no sufficient reason for occupying the best seats in the house of God. They have a consciousness, deeper than your logic, that it is monstrous to grade the sanctuary on the same principle that you do a concert-hall or a lecture-room. But, educated as they are to notions of equality, they are not going to such houses to have their self-respect affronted and put to shame. They neither believe in the houses, nor in the

men whose money or social standing puts on airs and claims distinctions within them. And hence, they prefer to remain at home, rather than to be thus reminded of their inferior position, and to be humiliated with the sense that deference in the house of God is rendered not to character, to manhood, but to the accidents of life. It is vain to argue against this feeling, to call it a wicked pride which ought to be put away. We cannot deny that the feeling is natural, and against a crying enormity in the house of God. Our sanctuaries are not empty because the common people are infidels, or are unwilling to do their fair share towards the support of the gospel; but simply because they will not consent to be humiliated by the claims and pretensions of wealth and worldliness in the presence of God. As they do not feel at home in the *houses* of the wealthy, is there any more reason why they should feel at home in the churches of the wealthy? As they do not presume to call at the one, is it not natural they should forsake the other? Make the meeting-house God's, and let the people feel that they are not intruders upon other men's premises, and we shall have removed the great obstacle to their presence in the sanctuary. Let them feel, when they stand before God, that they are the equals of princes and millionnaires, and that only character, only righteousness, can avail, and, I doubt not, we shall see them crowding the gates of Zion.

III. It will be conceded, I think, that the house of God is the home of the local church. Nor do I suppose there would be any difference of opinion as to whether it was the duty and office of the local church to give the gospel to all within the circuit of its influence. Especially will it put on the badges of its heavenly calling by preaching the gospel to the poor. When John sent his disciples to our Saviour for a proof of his divine character and mission, he said to them, "Go and

show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." As if all the other splendid tokens on the catalogue might be inconclusive; but the gospel preached to the poor demonstrated, as nothing else could, that he came from heaven. And does not the church or the ministry that imitates our Saviour in this, best prove that it has a mission from God?

How to save the masses is the problem which is given to the Christian mind of this generation to solve. And to us it is clear, that nothing will be done to purpose which does not originate in, and go out from, the church as its centre. The church is the only divine organism on earth. In her the Spirit ever dwells, and to her is given the commission to preach the gospel to every creature. All the machinery outside of her, in the shape of Sabbath schools and mission schools, books, papers, Christian associations, and the like, are well enough as instruments, but they cannot do her work, nor bring the world to Christ. Salvation goes forth from the house of God through the church of God. Gather them in,— *the masses,* — not into poor slips, not into churches for the poor, not into cheap sittings beneath the gallery or elsewhere. All these have been tried, and failed, for the sufficient reason that they were ingenious contrivances to get round a divine ordinance, to annul the word of him who hath said, "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." And the fine houses, too, for which there is just now such a passion, are no less a failure. The minister's salary, the pew-rentals, the expenses for choir, the interest on capital invested, are so enormous, that not only the absolutely poor, but those of moderate means, cannot afford the luxury of attending church. And so it turns out to-day, that the token

which we bring of our heavenly work is not that we preach the gospel to the poor, but to the rich.

It is a state as criminal as it is alarming. The common people constitute the vast majority not only, but they constitute by far the most hopeful and important class. They heard our Saviour gladly. They have more of candor, simplicity, genuineness, more depth, richness, strength, than the upper class. They have in excess the better qualities of our common humanity. Where do you expect to find hospitality, kindness, naturalness, and that ready sympathy for every object of suffering and need, if not in them? In them will be found the courage, the patience, the endurance, the adherence to principle, that make heroes and martyrs in abnormal times. From them are to come your clear-sighted business-men, your statesmen, generals, magistrates,— the men who shall be wise in counsel and mighty in action when the nation is rocked with the fury of passion, or swept with the tempest of war. Who fought your battles, guided your armies, and directed the Republic during its years of blood and tears? Not the wealthy, not the socially great; but the common people, and those who counted it their highest honor to have sprung from the common people.

The church of the future will be the church that cares for the common people. Methodism has had that distinction and glory for the last hundred years; and the result is her twenty thousand churches, compared with the less than three thousand of our own denomination, with all its boasting that it has preached the gospel to the more refined and intelligent classes, and *that*, during a period of two hundred and fifty years.

Who is wise, God or man, in this matter? The poor ye have with you always: the rich pass away. One, two, three generations use them up. But the poor remain, perpetually

vital, perpetually pressing up and on, enriching humanity, and contributing the largest share to whatever can advance or help the race. They are the workers of society, adding to the common weal, and making themselves at once the most useful and the most deserving members of society.

Nothing, then, can be more important than that we maintain our hold on the common people. We ought not to get above and beyond their sympathy. We ought to come near enough to them to understand their wants, so as to be able to help them bear their burdens, and feed the hunger of their souls. We need to know their toils, struggles, temptations, cares, sorrows, modes of thinking, living, that we may talk in a language which they comprehend, and which will make their hearts burn within them. But because we do *not* do this, the common people do *not* hear us gladly. We are educated above and away from them. Their sympathies are not answered by sympathies. They ask for bread, and we give them a stone. They come to the meeting-house, hoping, in the broad fatherhood of God, to realize the oneness of his children; but they find instead the petty pomp and pride of man standing between them and God, or rather, perhaps, standing in the place of God. Reason enough why they are so rapidly settling on the outside of the meeting-house! And yet they must not remain there: they must be brought in. But brought in they will not be, until they can come as to their Father's house, whose provisions are free, full, and for all.

And we see but one logical and adequate way *out* of the difficulty. The remedy is in our own hands, and the wonder is we have been so slow to see it and apply it. The modern meeting-house, for the purposes of evangelizing the masses, is a failure. Why not, then, try the old meeting-house, to which God holds inalienable title, and see if the people will turn

away their foot from that? Why should not Christian men, to whom God has intrusted large means, build free churches for all the people! Put them down on every hillside and in every valley. Wherever there are neighborhoods or communities unsupplied with sanctuary privileges, there rear the chapel, invite in the people; and whatever of service the minister cannot render, let it be made up by the godly laymen of the church. Let there be no lack: let the gospel be without stint. Let the ministry from the house of God, — absolutely his, and the home of all who seek him, — ring out the old invitation in all its literalness and fulness: "Ho, every one that thirsteth," &c. It does seem to us that when the gospel is put to men in such circumstances, they will listen: the church will have favor with God and with man.

IV. But if it is the duty of the local church, in her aggregated capacity, to give the gospel to the world, what is to be the *method* of her work? Is not the answer in the text, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in"? The command to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature was given, not to the ministry as such, but to the church at large. And I have no doubt the Saviour designedly used two different words in relation to this subject, — the one signifying to herald, the other to disciple. The two combined set the whole subject in its proper light. In heralding, the office of the human voice is recognized in educating, persuading, moving men; while, in discipling, we have a broader term, covering all those agencies and influences, whether of word or deed, of life or death, that may win a soul to Jesus. He not only preaches the gospel who presents its great and saving truths in spoken discourse, but he, as well, whose life is an incarnated gospel, raying out, and perpetuating its purity and power. The vital thing is the truth; and every method by which it can be conveyed to a

human soul is legitimate and timely. And it would be difficult to say which is the more powerful, — preaching lips or a preaching life. Certain it is that eloquent lips set to the music of a holy life have a double sweetness and attraction. The gift of eloquent speech is to be coveted, because of its rarity and charm; but a true life has a vastly higher grace and winsomness, while it is within the reach of us all.

The youngest, the most unlearned, the stammering, the timid, may live out the truth, and so ever repeat its instructions and emphasize its lessons.

In the early church, to be a Christian was to be a preacher of righteousness. Philip and Stephen, among the deacons, preached with power; while the Church at Jerusalem, scattered by persecution, went everywhere preaching the word. The results that followed are still a marvel, but no more, I apprehend, than would be the results which would follow like labors to-day. Commit to the millions of our Christendom the love and consecration, and zeal which set Paul on fire, and made the martyrs, and you have inaugurated a power that nothing could withstand. Set the millions of our membership on the work of discipling: let them go everywhere, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and by the laws of human nature they would move the world as it was never moved before.

We are to go after men, if they will not come to us. An open house, free to all who are disposed to come, is not enough. We shall not have done our duty, so long as we leave undone one thing which might be done to bring men to Christ. Are we not to compel them to come in? Men will believe that we are in earnest, when we not only prepare the house of the Lord, but when we go out to bring them in with the compulsory force of a holy love. They will not deny us when they see that we love their souls, and are enough in earnest to use our time and property to save them from everlasting burnings.

They doubt our sincerity, they question our faith in the awful doctrines of our creed. They see that we are quite content to prepare pleasant places for ourselves, and that the coming doom of the multitudes that neglect the sanctuary neither appalls nor disturbs us. Why should they not think our profession a sham, and turn from us as if we were pretenders and cheats? We shall compel men to go with us, when we convince them that we are genuine, and do not hold *our* interest and ease at a higher rate than we do *their* souls.

But have we done this? Look at your sanctuaries built simply for your own comfort and convenience. Remember, how, instead of going after men to compel them to come in, you have stood at the door to exclude them until they would pay the price; how, if they came in without the golden pass, you taunted them with stealing their preaching. With such notions controlling the sanctuary, I can understand how a Christian minister — a good man, I doubt not, — should say in my hearing recently, "I have nothing to do with men's coming to church: they know that I preach the gospel; and, if they will not come and hear me, it is their concern, not mine." I can understand, too, how another minister, lately settled over a large and influential church, should have stipulated, in the terms of settlement, that he should not be expected nor required to visit his people. But I do wonder how Christian ministers can so misread or misunderstand their Bibles. Does not the received text include this passage, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in"? This is something more than standing in a pulpit on the Sabbath, and reading one or two set discourses. It is something more than meeting in the vestry or lecture-room, — twenty, fifty, or a hundred, — once a week. "Go out," is the command; "compel them to come in;" go out *intending* to accomplish your errand; *expect* opposition, reproach, obloquy; but do

not return until you can bring your sheaves with you. Mean to save men, have a holy passion for souls, and God will give you the desire of your heart.

V. And the controlling motive to all this should be, *that God's house may be filled.*

God has connected with his house peculiar blessings. He foresaw, that, without some spot where the church should show a visible, organic life, it would be impossible to propagate and maintain the true knowledge of himself among men. The tabernacle, as the outward token of the presence of God, was found to be a simple necessity to preserve the Jews from lapsing into idolatry. And the temple followed, as the consummate flower of that idea. And it is worth considering, that, so long as the tribes went up devoutly and regularly to the house of the Lord, the national life beat strong and true, and they advanced in temporal and spiritual prosperity. But as they neglected the sanctuary, and held back their pious offerings from God, religion declined, the public morals were corrupted, idolatry came in, and God was turned to be their enemy.

And what was true of the temple in the olden time, is equally true of the meeting-house of these Christain centuries. No one, who is familiar with its history, can doubt that it is linked with the temporal and eternal interests of men. Show me a community where the people keep holy time, and go up to the courts of the Lord, and I will show you a community where all the virtues and graces flourish and abound. The golden age of New England, when her people were most hardy and simple, and honest and brave, was when her whole population rested on the Sabbath, and was found reverently waiting on the services of the sanctuary. And the decline in piety and in the public morals has been just in the ratio of the non-attendance of the people on public worship. We can

hardly be so blind as not to see that. A necessity is laid upon us, therefore, to bring the people back to the sanctuary, before their impiety shall provoke the judgments of heaven.

Need it be said that few come to God who do not go to his house? There his Spirit hovers over the worshipper, and there his word is preached, which is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto the salvation of them that believe. And I am yet to see, or learn of, a revival of religion among any people that forsook the assembling of themselves together. It would seem as if God had made that a condition for the exertion of his saving power. And hence, if we would save men, we must congregate them. I exult when I think of the good time coming, in which every house reared for the worship of God shall not only be open and free to all comers, but when the people shall flock to them as a cloud. I can hardly imagine a greater joy than such a sight would give the people of God. Could they but see the churches filled, the whole population kneeling by the altars, many of them would lift their streaming eyes to heaven and say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." If the people cannot be brought back to the house of the Lord, our national career will soon be run. What power have we to deal with the ignorance and poverty and crime that are pouring in upon us from the old world; with Romanism, mustering here its millions; with the peepings and mutterings of Spiritism; with the beastliness of Mormonism and heathenism combined; and with that spirit of pure diabolism that is stalking abroad in the land? If we cannot make our churches rallying centres, and gather the people within them, to stand for the principles which have come of the Puritan life and faith, we are lost. No narrow policy, that turns away the masses in disgust from our sanctuaries, will answer. Nor can we afford to do so wicked and foolish a

thing. The day will come when we shall need the common people again to fight either the material or the moral battle with these vaunting enemies of our free institutions. We could not do a more fatal thing to the highest interests of this land than to shut the door of the churches in the face of the masses. If the meeting-house goes down, every thing worth preserving goes with it: we cut the last visible strand between God and man. The meeting-house is the great educator and conservator of the public conscience. The honesties and moralities cannot long survive after the people have got outside of the sanctuary. And to that are we not rapidly tending? To reverse this tendency, and turn the heart of the people back to the sanctuary, is the great mission of the local church. And the work given us to do, in the salvation of this land for liberty and Christ and truth, never can be done without the meeting-house. Give us that, — open, free to all weary, sad, hungry souls seeking after God, — and we believe we have the most important factor to the right solution of the problem.

And in this sentiment we have shown our faith to-day by our works. We bring our contribution to aid in saving the masses, and, *through* the masses, our land and the world. We dedicate this house unto God, — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, — vesting in him the absolute ownership, and making it, so long as it stands, the home of his people. We believe the builders of this house were moved of the Lord to make it a free-will offering unto him. So plainly do they see his hand in all the steps that marked the way to the conception and erection of it, that they cannot doubt he has led them.

This house is the Lord's, from foundation to turret: every board and timber and nail is his. Nor have his people consecrated what is not their own; but after paying every bill, or providing for its payment, they present the house, free of

debt, and without encumbrance of any kind, unto God. The offering they make is as costly as it is rare, and is the fruit of much self-denial; but it is made joyfully and heartily.

In making this house the Lord's, in throwing its doors wide open, and inviting all who will to come in, without money and without price, we believe they have followed the divine pattern, and wrought out the divine idea of God's house. Whatever title or claim they may have had to it they have now surrendered. It is no longer theirs, but God's, — the free and welcome refuge of all who seek him. No distinctions arising from wealth or social position can ever invade this sacred presence. He who has given most will be on a level with him who has given least, or, perhaps, nothing at all. Here the burdened, the sorrowing, the poor, the needy, may come, as to their Father's house, where is ever sympathy and kindness and aid. No sinning one, sick of himself, and longing for a better life, need fear to enter here. No weary one, loathing the empty frivolities with which the world cheats and allures her votaries, need pass by these open doors. No bowed, trembling, heart-aching one need turn away from the help and consolation which God will here give his people, lest his soul should be smitten with the cold words and the colder looks of those who will come here to worship. Here there will be no first, no last. Those who come to this house will come as brethren, with the same infinite wants, aspiring after the same eternal hopes, nourished by the same word, and sanctified by the same spirit. Money will help no one here; social position will give him no advantage. Here the rich and the poor will meet together.

God's own house! At last I realize the dream of years. This *is* the house of the Lord: his title of ownership has now been made complete. For the first time, there comes over me the sweet sense that I stand in my Father's house; and while

that title vests in him, no man shall ask me, What do ye here? I am here because this is Father's house; and where should a child go but there? And are we not all children, and all at home? It is good to be here. On this very spot, a sainted woman, who prayed much, and longed to see the salvation of God, lived and wrought and died. Who knows but that God, in answer to her prayers, gave her this comely house to be the birthplace of souls, and the home for generations of his people. I love to think that God thus perpetuates the lives of his children long after they have rested from earthly toil.

This movement is but begun. The Christian consciousness in relation to it is, at last, fully aroused. The press, the platform, and the pulpit are discussing it. Scores of churches are already putting it to the test, and hundreds of others are ready to follow just so soon as it shall be proved a success. I have no doubt the principle is right; and therefore I am confident of its ultimate triumph.

And what a day that will be for the churches of this land, when they throw open their houses of worship, level human distinctions, and go after the world to fill them. The Unitarians in Boston have opened, during the past two winters, the halls and theatres, and invited the multitude to hear their best preachers. And the houses have been crowded. The churches will be as much so, when they are as freely opened, who can doubt? When that time comes, the ministry can hardly fail to preach with new freedom and power. With what heart, or by what right, can a minister go out and invite men to come in and fill a house that is owned and occupied by proprietors? But make the house God's, and he will see a new meaning in the terms of his commission, and feel a new inspiration to duty.

When the pastor of this church stands here to deliver the messages of life, will he not preach better, from an abiding

sense that he stands as God's ambassador in God's house, to beseech men to be reconciled to God? He will not be ever asking, How can I fill the house, and sell the pews, and pay the parish expenses? Rather he will be asking, How can I preach the gospel fully, faithfully, fearlessly, so as to save the souls of them that hear? And I greatly mistake, if those who shall worship here do not feel a new sense of the divine presence from the very fact that this is, in a real sense, the house of God. And they will expect that the preacher will not exhibit himself, but Christ; that he will deal with their consciences and hearts, rather than amuse their intellects or please their taste.

And now, dear brethren, to whom God has given grace to build unto him this beautiful house, suffer the word of exhortation. What you have done is only preparatory: harder work is yet before you. You have prepared the place: now go out and compel these neglecters to come in, that the house may be filled. Do that and you cannot fail: neglect it, and you have no right to expect success.

The eyes of the churches are upon you, and you must not fail. You are leading the way to a new era of Christian life and power; your example is helping settle a principle that is fraught with the evangelization of this land and of all lands. God has counted you faithful, giving you this trust. For his sake, and the sake of those for whom Christ died, hold it steadfast. Keep open doors. May Jesus abide here evermore! and may you, and those who shall follow you in long succession, come here and learn how he rests the weary, comforts the sorrowing, forgives the sinning, and saves the perishing!